



## TEACHERS' REINFORCEMENT STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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### ABSTRACT

*This study ascertained the teachers' reinforcement strategies for effective classroom management in secondary schools in Anambra State. One research question guided the study. The descriptive survey research design was employed in the study. Population for the study comprised 5,674 teachers from 259 public secondary schools in the 6 education zones in Anambra State. Sample size of the study constituted of 851 (15 percent) teachers from 207 (80 percent) public secondary schools in the 6 education zones selected using the stratified random sampling technique. An 8-item researcher-developed questionnaire structured on a 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used for data collection. The instrument was face validated by three experts from the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and one Measurement and Evaluation expert from the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Reliability of the research instrument was established through a pilot-test carried out once on a single administration sampling 20 teachers in some selected 4 public secondary schools in Enugu State, which was not part of the study. Data collated after the pilot test were measured using Cronbach Alpha statistics which gave internal consistency reliability value of 0.84. The instrument was distributed to the respondents by the researcher with the help of five research assistants. Data collated were analyzed using mean scores rated at 2.50 and standard deviation statistics. The conclusion in the study was that reinforcement strategies were found essential for addressing and mitigating conflicts before they escalate, ensuring a stable learning environment. Based on the findings of the study, it was among others recommended that school administrators and educational authorities like the Post Primary Schools Service Commission (PPSSC) should provide continuous enhanced professional development programmes focusing on reinforcement strategies and skills, that will assist teachers in promoting effective classroom management strategies.*

**Keywords:** Teachers; Reinforcement strategies; Effective Classroom Management; Secondary Schools.

### Introduction

Teachers' reinforcement is a powerful tool for promoting desirable behaviours and deterring misconduct. Teachers in Anambra State secondary schools need to implement various forms of positive reinforcement, including verbal praise, rewards, and recognition. These strategies help in



building a positive classroom atmosphere where students are motivated to adhere to established norms and expectations. According to Nwakoby, (2025), Ugwaka, and Igbokwe (2020), Okaforcha and Okeke, (2025), Nwakoby and Iloka, (2025) and Enwezor and Obi, (2022). positive reinforcement involves recognizing and rewarding good behaviour to encourage its recurrence. Reinforcement in the classroom requires some strategies. Strategies include verbal praise, reward systems, public recognition, granting privileges and responsibilities, engaging in positive interactions and sending positive notes home. Okaforcha and Okeke, (2020) and Nwankwo, and Ezeibe, (2021) opined that granting students additional privileges or responsibilities as a form of positive reinforcement helps in motivating them to maintain good behaviour. For example, allowing a student to lead a class activity, be a class monitor, or have extra free time can be powerful incentives for maintaining positive behaviour. According to Enwezor, (2021), Nwabachili, Iloka and Ucheagwu-Okoye, (2022), Okeke, (2022) and Okeke and Okaforcha, (2025) regularly engaging in positive interactions with students, such as greeting them warmly, showing genuine interest in their lives, and being approachable, helps in building strong teacher-student relationships. These interactions make students feel valued and respected, which in turn encourages them to behave positively and cooperate in class. This approach builds a positive classroom climate where students feel appreciated and motivated to behave well (Nwankwo and Aroh, (2019),). positive reinforcement is necessary for classroom management.

Classroom management consists of conduct management – which refers to the set of procedural skills that teachers employ in their attempt to address and resolve discipline problems in the classroom; content management – which is related to teachers managing the space, materials, equipment, and the movement - this focuses on the classroom group as a social system that has its own features that teachers have to take into account when managing interpersonal relationships in the classroom. Besides, management, according to Ogbonnaya (2014), Ekwesianya, Okaforcha and Okeke, (2020), Okaforcha and Okeke, (2019), Ojimba, (2020) Iloka and Nwakoby, (2025) Enwezor, (2021) and Ojimba, (2024) is the coordination of an organization's resources through the act of planning, organizing, directing, and managing all energies aimed at accomplishing organizational goals. Management also includes the act of running or controlling anything, as well as, the ability to deal with people or situations in any way (Ethelmary, Ezeaku 2019). In support of Evertson and Weinstein, Iloka, (2025), stated that a good classroom manager is able to prevent undesirable classroom behavior and thereby foster desirable behavior. One of the main objectives of a teacher in higher institution of learning is to impart useful knowledge to his or her students in order to enhance their moral, physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual elements. From all the above discussions, teachers' effective classroom management has a lot of benefits which includes: providing a conducive climate, atmosphere and learning environment for students' learning, creating opportunities for meaningful teaching and learning, fostering attainment of both instructional and educational goals, among others. For Abonyi, (2022), Ucheagwu-Okoye, (2025), Nneka Anthonia Obumse and Uju Egenti (2021), Onyekwelu, (2024) and Obumse and Chinwe, (2021) effective classroom management creates an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. Ineffective classroom management often creates chaos. Likewise, Nwankwo, (2022), Obumse, (2022), Nonyem and Chimaa, (2020) argued that ineffectively managed classrooms have boredom and failure in achievement of educational goals as their characteristics. In the same vein,



Ucheagwu-Okoye, (2025), Enwezor and Chukwunonye, (2022), Onyekwelu, (2024) and Osegbue, and Nnubia, (2020) agreed that organizing the classroom efficiently and effectively for positive learning outcome is largely dependent on the ability of the teachers. Biodun cited in Osegbue, (2022) stated that good classroom management helps to prevent unnecessary discipline problems by students in the classroom and promotes good behaviour and better academic results. From a pedagogical standpoint, teaching and learning can only occur in an orderly classroom. Orderliness here does not only imply quiet or rigid classroom but it refers to classroom whose activities indicate engaging students in meaningful learning. The teacher does this by adopting some workplace strategies. Therefore, school teachers are expected to continuously innovate their classroom strategies and management using effective workplace strategies in order to maintain their educational quality (Nwankwo and Okoye, 2022). Ofozoba, (2020), Ibe, (2019), Anushiem, (2017) and Ekwesianya, (2022), noted that workplace strategies as applicable to teachers' classroom management as described within the context of this study are skills applied by teachers to organize, control, coordinate and manage activities going on inside the classroom. In the same vein, Onyekwelu, (2021), Azubuike, (2025), Okaforcha and Iloka, (2025), Ucheagwu-Okoye, (2021) and Okoye, (2025) opined that teachers' workplace strategies are several strategies and techniques applicable to effective classroom management. They can also be referred to as those measures, strategies and strategies employed by teachers to maintain decorum in the classroom and, as a result, establish a healthy and conducive learning environment for achievement of educational objectives (Nwachukwu & Uzokife, 2022). Osegbue, (2021); Ekwesianya, (2025), Ezeaku and Okoye, (2025) and Okechukwu, (2025) argued that when strategies are executed effectively, teachers minimize the deviant and unruly behaviours that impede learning for both individual students and groups of students, while maximizing the behaviours that facilitate or enhance learning.

According to Okaforcha, (2021), Adinna and Onyekwelu, (2021) and Anthony (2014) the effectiveness of classroom management in secondary schools in Anambra State is significantly enhanced by teachers' positive reinforcement strategies. Through positive reinforcement, teachers are able to create and sustain a productive learning environment. These strategies not only improve students' behaviour and academic performance but also contribute to the overall educational experience. Never minding the relevance of these strategies in promoting effective classroom management, yet, many teachers seem not to apply them in the classroom.

Researcher's personal observations shows that many secondary schools in Anambra State seem not to have settled learning environment. In such schools with unsettled learning environment, they are faced with such challenges like disciplinary problems, students' unrest and disruption of academic activities, including, conflicts, and general classroom disorder are also prevalent issues in such schools. These challenges undermine educational outcomes, student engagement, and overall school climate; therefore, making it almost impossible for quality teaching and learning to take place. Although, the teachers in these secondary schools are qualified to teach, yet, many cannot manage their classrooms efficiently and effectively. Abonyi, (2020), Okechukwu, (2025), Enwezor, and Obi, (2022), Ezeaku, (2025), Onyekwelu, and Adinna, (2022), Anthony, (2019) and



Anushiem and Anushiem, (2023) complaining about the poor quality of teaching and learning in schools which seem to be attributed to ineffective classroom management, observed that teachers in most secondary schools in Nigeria, Anambra State inclusive, complained that one of the challenges they encounter in the course of their profession is classroom management and its worrying consequences on quality education. The teachers are observed to use punishment more often in the classrooms than positive reinforcement and rewards, thereby making students to be afraid of them rather than respect them. Also, students in classrooms sleep while classes are on, make noise, move in and out of the classroom, fight, and chew gum, among other vices in the presence of the teacher in the classroom.

With this scenario, misbehaviour and poor performance becomes the order of the day in most schools. Osegbue, (2019), Izuchukwu, Ugwaka, Arazu and Ezechi, (2023), Abonyi, (2021) Okeke, Okaforcha and Ekwesianya, (2019) and Okoye, (2021) argued that the concern for quality teaching and learning has been at the core of the motivating forces for reforms in education, secondary schools inclusive. This implies that quality teaching focuses on enhancing and improving the processes of teaching and learning in order to produce students who are worthy in character and in academics. This means that the learning environment in secondary schools in Nigeria and in Anambra State, must be conducive and safe enough for quality teaching and learning to take place.

Parents and students are often seen complaining about the classroom activities of the teachers in secondary schools. Teachers on the other hand complain of students' inattentiveness, disruptive behaviour and lack of cooperation among others. This seems to be the case in secondary schools in Anambra State. Teachers in the State often complain that one of the challenges they face in carrying out their duties as teachers is how to manage their classes that are most times over populated and lack sufficient learning and teaching resources which are all obstacles to effective classroom instruction for quality teaching. The effect of this is that the students are constantly sent out of the classrooms, punished, suspended and sometimes expelled from school. As a result of this, indiscipline among students abounds and quality teaching and learning hindered (Ucheagwu-Okoye, 2025). Onyekwelu, (2024), Enwezor, and Chukwunonye, (2021), Ugwaka and Igbokwe (2023), Ofozoba and Ofozoba, (2023) and Abonyi, (2023) noted that the need for the classroom teachers to possess the necessary skills and to a great extent use them to manage instruction and behaviour in secondary schools for quality teaching seem to be neglected and therefore, warranting the researcher to understudy teachers' positive reinforcement strategies for promoting effective classroom management in secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to ascertain teachers' reinforcement strategies for promoting effective classroom management in secondary schools. Specific objective of the study was to determine teachers' positive reinforcement strategies for promoting effective classroom management in secondary schools in Anambra State.





**Research Question:** What are the teachers' positive reinforcement strategies for promoting effective classroom management in secondary schools in Anambra State?

## **Method**

The descriptive survey research design was employed in the study. This design was used to collect data from a sample of public secondary school teachers in Anambra State from their large population using the questionnaire in order to showcase their opinions as regards to the present study. Information gathered from all the sample were analyzed with appropriate statistics of mean and standard deviation in order to conclude the study. Population for the study comprised 5,674 teachers from 259 public secondary schools in the 6 education zones in Anambra State. Sample size of the study constituted of 851 (15 percent) teachers from 207 (80 percent) public secondary schools in the 6 education zones selected using the stratified random sampling technique. Justification for selecting the sample of teachers and public secondary schools at 15% and 80% respectively, was as a means to enable the researcher to have controllable sample size of the teachers' population in Anambra State. An 8-item researcher-developed questionnaire structured on a 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used for data collection. The instrument was titled "Teachers Reinforcement strategies for Effective Classroom Management Survey (TRSECMS)". Construction of the questionnaire was guided by the literature reviewed, purpose of the study and research questions. The TRSECMS was face validated by three experts from the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and one Measurement and Evaluation expert from the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. These experts determined the face and content validity of the research instrument. They equally made useful corrections on some of the items in the questionnaire which was incorporated before the final print out of the instrument. Reliability of the research instrument was established through a pilot-test carried out once on a single administration sampling 20 teachers in some selected 4 public secondary schools in Enugu State, which was not part of the study. Data collated after the pilot test were measured using Cronbach Alpha statistics which gave internal consistency reliability value of 0.84 for TRSECMS, showcasing that the questionnaire was reliable for the study. TRSECMS was distributed to the respondents by the researcher with the help of five research assistants who were residence from the six education zones where the sampled public secondary schools were located in Anambra State. An on-the-spot method was adopted by the researcher and the research assistants to distribute copies of the questionnaire to ensure maximum recovery of the questionnaire administered. These research assistants were equally briefed about the intention of the study likewise on how to meet with the teachers in order to collect the necessary data for the study. All the copies of the questionnaire distributed to the respondents were recovered back by the researcher and research assistants within a period of seven working days at a return rate of 100%. Data collated were analyzed using mean scores rated at 2.50 and standard deviation statistics. The decision rule for interpreting the scores on each statement on the questionnaire was based on the mean scale, which was benchmarked on 2.50 rating. Only mean scores of the respondents' statements which rated 2.50 and above were regarded as an indication of Agree (A), and therefore, accepted. While mean scores of the respondents' statements which rated below 2.50 was regarded as an indication of Disagree (D), and therefore, not accepted.



## Presentation of Results

Research Question: What are the teachers' positive reinforcement strategies for effective classroom management in secondary schools in Anambra State?

**Table 3: Mean Scores and SD Ratings of Teachers on their Positive Reinforcement Strategies Promoting Effective Classroom Management in Secondary Schools in Anambra State**

N = 851 Teachers

S/N	Please give your opinion concerning positive reinforcement strategies which promotes effective classroom management in your school. Teachers' strategies in:	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD	Decision
1.	offering praise for good behaviour and academic achievements to promote a positive classroom atmosphere that helps in reducing anxiety and promoting a sense of safety and belonging among students in the classroom	322	478	31	20	3.29	0.65	Agree
2.	implementing effective reward systems, such as giving out stickers, certificates, or points, that can be exchanged for privileges, to assist in reinforcing positive behaviours likewise encourage students to maintain good behaviour and high performance in the classroom	323	417	88	23	3.22	0.74	Agree
3.	sending positive notes home to inform parents about their children's good behaviour or academic achievements thereby, reinforcing the desired behaviours in the classroom likewise at home as well	301	390	109	51	3.11	0.84	Agree
4.	recognizing students publicly during assemblies, class meetings, or on school bulletin boards to serve as a model for other students to emulate for their positive behaviours and achievements which helps in promoting a culture of excellence and respect in the classroom	400	353	60	38	3.31	0.79	Agree
5.	providing positive feedback that is specific, timely, and focused on students' efforts and achievements to assist in reinforcing good behaviours, high academic performance likewise encourage continuous efforts in the classroom	390	370	35	56	3.29	0.83	Agree
6.	granting students additional privileges or responsibilities as a form of positive reinforcement which help in motivating them to maintain good behaviour in the classroom	388	400	44	19	3.36	0.68	Agree
7.	regularly engaging in positive interactions with students, such as greeting them warmly, showing genuine interest in their lives, and being approachable, which helps in building strong teacher-student relationships, in turn, encourage students to behave positively and cooperate in the classroom	356	350	97	48	3.19	0.85	Agree
8.	applying positive punishments as reinforcement to improve students' academic performance in the classroom	351	374	76	50	3.21	0.83	Agree
<b>Overall Mean Score &amp; SD =</b>						<b>3.25</b>	<b>0.78</b>	Agree

Analysis of data from Table 3 indicated that all the items from 1-8 were rated above 2.50 of the criterion mean score to show the respondents (teachers) agreement with these statements. None



the items were rated below 2.50 of the criterion mean score to show the respondents (teachers) disagreement with these statements. Their overall mean score and SD is 3.25 and 0.78 respectively, indicating closeness in their responses. However, this result indicated that teachers' positive reinforcement strategies promoted effective classroom management in secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Discussion of Findings**

It was further discovered in the present study that teachers' positive reinforcement strategies promoted effective classroom management in secondary schools in Anambra State. This finding included that when teachers efficiently employed such positive reinforcement strategies as: offering praise for good behaviour and academic achievements to promote a positive classroom atmosphere that helps in reducing anxiety and promoting a sense of safety and belonging among students in the classroom, implementing effective reward systems, such as giving out stickers, certificates, or points, that can be exchanged for privileges, to assist in reinforcing positive behaviours likewise encourage students to maintain good behaviour and high performance in the classroom, sending positive notes home to inform parents about their children's good behaviour or academic achievements thereby, reinforcing the desired behaviours in the classroom likewise at home as well, recognizing students publicly during assemblies, class meetings, or on school bulletin boards to serve as a model for other students to emulate for their positive behaviours and achievements which helps in promoting a culture of excellence and respect in the classroom, providing positive feedback that is specific, timely, and focused on students' efforts and achievements to assist in reinforcing good behaviours, high academic performance likewise encourage continuous efforts in the classroom, granting students additional privileges or responsibilities as a form of positive reinforcement which help in motivating them to maintain good behaviour in the classroom, regularly engaging in positive interactions with students, such as greeting them warmly, showing genuine interest in their lives, and being approachable, which helps in building strong teacher-student relationships, in turn, encourage students to behave positively and cooperate in the classroom, and applying positive punishments as reinforcement to improve students' academic performance in the classroom; all these strategies promoted effective classroom management in secondary schools in Anambra State. This finding is in consonance and does not deviate with Ezeamama, Ofozoba (2023) Ibe, (2022), Okoye, and Ezeaku, (2025), Anushiem, (2023), Azubuike, (2024) and Okeke, Okaforcha and Ekwesianya, (2019), study which found out that teacher reward influenced pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Rivers State and delegation of duties influenced pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Rivers State. In this regard, there was a significant relationship between teachers' reward system and academic performance of the students in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The study thus concluded that, classroom discipline, effective teaching, teachers' rewards including reinforcements and delegation of authority to pupils, all had significant relation with pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Rivers State. The present study finding also concurs with Nwankwo, Omebe and Anikeze (2019) study which found out that teachers in public schools used reinforcement for quality teaching and learning to a low extent, while teachers in private schools uses it to a great extent. The results showed that teachers in private schools to a



great extent used adequate reinforcement methods that can effectively motivate the students for quality teaching and learning better than teachers in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

### **Conclusion**

Promoting effective classroom management is integral to fostering an environment conducive to teaching and learning, particularly, in secondary schools. The study has examined positive reinforcement strategies employed by teachers in secondary schools in Anambra State to enhance effective classroom management. The findings underscore the importance of positive reinforcement in setting expectations and preventing misunderstandings that could lead to disruptions in the classroom. Teachers' positive reinforcement strategies, characterized by setting high standards and employing engaging teaching methods, has been shown to keep students focused and motivated in class. Positive reinforcement strategies are found to be very crucial for encouraging desirable behaviours and fostering a supportive classroom climate. By implementing the strategies investigated in this study, this would create more effective and supportive learning environments, ultimately benefiting both students and teachers. This study serves as a foundational step towards achieving sustainable improvements in classroom management strategies in secondary schools across the region.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study which is on positive reinforcement strategies for promoting effective classroom management in secondary schools in Anambra State, several recommendations were made they include that:

1. School administrators and educational authorities like the Post Primary Schools Service Commission (PPSSC) should provide continuous enhanced professional development programmes focusing on advanced positive reinforcement behaviours that will assist teachers in promoting effective classroom management strategies.
2. Also, with continuous training, this will equip teachers with the latest positive reinforcement skills, strategies and techniques to effectively manage their classrooms and address evolving challenges in order to promote effective classroom management.
3. Principals should encourage teachers to foster a school-wide culture including initiatives, assemblies, and recognition programmes that emphasizes respect, collaborations, and positive reinforcement that creates an environment where students feel valued and motivated to adhere to behavioural expectations which supports and promotes effective classroom management.





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